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Subject: The Duty of Living Peaceably.

# PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

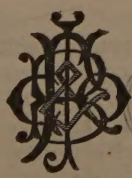
A Weekly Publication

OF

# SERMONS

PREACHED BY

## HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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# THE DUTY OF LIVING PEACEABLY.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."—ROM. XII: 18.

You will observe that this command is not absolute, but conditional. The popular impression is that a Christian man should be peaceable to the extent that he should never resent nor resist. Whenever Christian men are concerned in the defense of things right; whenever they are the occasion of a great deal of excitement; especially when ministers of the Gospel stir up communities by the qualities which they show, there is a shower of execrations hurled at them. "They ought," it is said, "to be followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. They ought to be men of peace. It is a shame for them to be exciting people. It is their business to preach peace."

The true vocation of every Christian is to live peaceably—and that, although the example of the Lord Jesus Christ was preeminently one which stirred up trouble wherever he went. No man ever had more enemies than Christ had. No man ever produced greater excitement. And he finally declared that he came, not to send peace, but a sword. His Gospel was to be like light in a bat's cave. It was to be like fire. It was to reveal truth. And the apostles were described as the men who had turned the world upside down.

"These that have turned the world upside down are come hither."

There was a fire made about them. And in every age of the world God's foremost servants have proved it impossible to avoid conflict. Confusions have arisen out of their testimony and career. A great deal of passion has burned around about them which they could have quenched by holding their peace and retiring from conflict. On the whole, although it is unquestionably true that one characteristic element in a Christian disposition is peace, and although the benison of God is pronounced upon peacemakers, yet it is unquestionably true that there is a duty of excitement. The

SUNDAY EVENING, Oct, 22, 1871. LESSON: Psalm LXXXIV. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 905, 896, 889.

apostle himself, in the passage which we have selected as the foundation of our remarks to-night implies that. "*If it be possible.*" It is impossible, often. In a great many cases it is impossible. "If it be possible, *as much as lieth in you*, live peaceably with all men." You have no right to bring in any disturbance. You are to carry in yourself the feeling of peace, and the desire for peace. You are to be controlled wholly by good will toward men. You are to study the things which make for their happiness and for their pleasure—not their lower happinesss nor their pleasure as animals, but the happiness and pleasure of their higher and nobler selves. You are to be almoners of God's bounty in these respects; and in so far as lieth in you, you are to be under the control neither of a quarreling disposition nor of the savage spirit of passion, but you are to be filled full of love to God and to your fellow-men; and you are to feel that the command still comes to you, "As much as lieth in you, if it be possible, live peaceably with all men." But when you have done all that you can, you will find that it is not possible to live peaceably with all men. You will find that contentions and conflicts will come up.

I propose to show, in this discourse, what it is in us that we can control, which is an especial cause of disturbance and strife; and what are some of the things which we cannot control, and which are the causes of great disturbance.

All that disturbance of men's peace which arises from the predominance in us of malign passions, or which springs from our lower nature, we are bound everywhere to restrain. We have no right to be a cause of disturbance by living in that part of our nature which tends continually to interfere with the happiness or welfare of our fellow-men. We have no right to employ offensive or provoking language in our intercourse with our fellow-men. I am speaking now of our intercourse socially and privately. Of course it is so in public. I am speaking to you of a duty which belongs to you in your homes, in your business, in your stores, and in your shops—the duty of so controlling your tongue that your words shall not be provocations. We shall be judged by our words. He that governs his own tongue is a perfect man, and is able also to govern his own body. Words are arrows. They are often poisonous arrows. They have in them oftentimes the fire of hell. They set the soul on fire as if it were kindled of hell.

There are many that have great power of speech who do not feel that the law of God is incumbent upon them in the use which they make of their tongues. A great many men who are just in many things are unjust in speaking. A great many persons

who are cautious in their demeanor abroad, at home and in their own household are heedless, and even rash. There are Christian heads of families who shoot across the table from day to day words which stir up the worst feelings that men can have. Many children are brought up in the midst of provocations and quarrels. Many and many a household has no chimney which carries away the smoke of these conflicts, and the smoke falls down, leaving harm where it rests; and there is a settled condition of unhappiness as the result.

There comes finally a spirit of pride. One will not be overcome by the other, and each sets traps for the other. There are various little points of resistance and retaliation. There are petty ways in which one avenges himself on the other, and shows that he is not to be put down, nor snubbed, nor in any way maltreated.

So it comes to pass that many persons who have good qualities live in disquiet all the time, simply by reason of the ill-advised use of the tongue. It is not controlled. It is a sword that almost never lies at rest in its sheath. It is perpetually flashing here and there, disturbing men. There are some households of which it may be said that all the losses and troubles which come upon them through the providence of God do not equal the disquietude which they suffer on account of the malign use of the tongue at home.

Now, if any man has named the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, his tongue is not to be an instrument of the malign passions. It is to be an instrument of kindness. And I say to every such man, As much as lieth in your tongue, live peaceably with your wife, and your children, and your servants, and your fellow men. If you indulge in unadvised speeches, sharp speeches, querulous speeches, irritating speeches; if by your tongue you keep men at variance with you, you are acting the part of Satan, and not the part of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That which is true of the tongue is also true of the carriage. A man can look speech as well as speak speech. A man may sometimes by silence say more than he does by speaking. A nod of the head, a lifting up of the eyes, a shrug of the shoulder, the whole manner, is as powerful as speech. Do not you know that there is what is called *natural language?* If a man is intensely proud, you can always see that he carries himself proudly. If a man is firm and obstinate, you can see that he stands like a column of marble. If a man is mirthful and humorous, you will see that he is all the time joking and laughing. We have no right to be provoking in our attitudes. We are bound to take care of the natural language of the body. We are bound to carry ourselves so as not to

be vexing. Our whole carriage should be such as to be in the service of love. Those, therefore, who have produced disquiet in the household, or in the social circle, or among laboring men, by an unwise carriage of themselves, or by an unwise use of their tongues, need to give heed to this command, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you live peaceably."

We may likewise produce great disquiet and opposition by an unconscious, and still more by a conscious and intended, insolent conduct of pride toward men. Pride shows itself inwardly or outwardly. If it works inwardly, it is gracious and noble. It inspires in a man a higher sense of manhood. He may think himself select, excellent, and above others; but it is on account of things which are essentially noble and manly. But where pride in a man works outwardly, he is attempting to put himself above other men, and he carries a perpetual comparison with him which is offensive to them. Frequently the very presence of a man who is filled with a spirit of pride and self-importance is an insult. And what is curious is, that wherever men go, who have in an intense form this constitution of insolent pride, they are almost invariably of the impression that other people insult them. I know of men who every day are insulted somewhere or somehow. Somebody is always insulting them. They are insulted in the street, and in the store, and in the shop. The fact is, a man gets what he carries. He wakes up in others that which is in him. If he is insultingly proud, others will be insultingly proud over against him.

The duty of humility is not simply a duty of the closet. We are bound to humble ourselves before God in such a way that when we go before men, a consciousness of our own supreme importance and a cold and haughty way, shall not carry offense and disturbance. As much as lieth in you, live peaceably and humbly.

Selfishness, or the disposition to sacrifice others' interests to your own, produces disputes and wranglings and contentions; and this, not only in the social circle, but in all forms of business. The ten thousand jealousies and envies which are current in business circles and business transactions arise from the inconsiderate selfishness of men among men. Many men are not liked, and are spoken against, although there is much that is good in them, because they are selfish. In their eagerness to gratify their selfishness, they look out mainly for themselves, and neglect others, and so excite the opposition of their fellow men.

Now, you cannot be a man of peace while you are thinking only of yourself. The apostle says, "Look not every man on his

own things, but every man also on the things of others." "Ye are members one of another." No man has a right to conduct his business without any regard to the interests of other people. You are bound to recognize the principle of brotherhood and of the fellowship of interest. And if you are cold and proud in these respects, you do not fulfill the duty enjoined upon you of living peaceably among men. Selfishness is a disturber of neighborhoods. It is hard to live peaceably with a selfish man. Selfishness is a constant provocation to the worst side of our nature.

I will mention another source of disturbance which perhaps the older members of my congregation do not need to have discussed in their presence, but a discussion of which may be beneficial to the younger members. I mean the untrained disposition of jocosity. I mean all forms of teasing, jesting, irony, sarcasm, wit, which are indulged in at another's expense, and which are not "convenient." I mean that whole class of malign developments of humor which are so much employed in society. The ministration of wit may be benign. It seems to me that in a world where there is so much sorrow and trouble, that is a beneficent constitution which enables a man to see everything in a humorous light. There are some men to whom trouble, when it strikes them, although it gives them pain, takes on some form of humor. There are men who see brightness and scintillations of wit in places where other people see nothing but darkness and gloom. There is in the ministration of wit the power of alleviating care, of driving away distress, of gilding the dark face of things in human life with brighter colors. That man who has the power of brilliancy, of repartee, of suggestion, of mirth and humor; that man who can facilitate the intercourse of life with these elements, is most fortunate. It is very much to be regretted that men do not understand the import of these gifts of God, and that wit is so largely used to gild wickedness, and to serve malignity.

The art of teasing may be considered a demoniac art; and society is full of little devils. If a man were to go round in life using his hands as some do their disposition to tease; if he were to shove a man who was coming round the corner into the gutter, and then disappear; if he were to pinch another man, and make him bound with pain; if he were to put a needle where another sat on it, and got up a great deal quicker than he sat down; if he were to put a match where another would step on it and set it on fire; if he were to explode a torpedo in another's pocket; if he were perpetually doing such things, he would probably be not simply knocked down, but killed, before he had gone through a very long career.

Men do not act in that way; but there are many who, wherever they go, are always teasing. Ordinarily, this teasing is practiced where the victim has no power of resistance. You shall often see persons pulling little children's hair, saying things that stir up little children's feelings; exposing things that they do not want to have known, in order to see the flush on their cheeks; or creating a laugh at their expense. Saying disagreeable things in a calm and ironical way is inexcusable. There is a teasing which is pleasant, and causes nobody suffering; but teasing for the sake of making other people uncomfortable is fiendish. Any man who finds his happiness in another person's suffering is a little devil. For a devil is one that loves iniquity in any measure. Anybody who, in the family, or shop, or store, or street, finds pleasure in making other people unhappy, is devilish. There are many persons that have great warm hearts and kind dispositions, who do many things in the name of wit and humor which do not comport with their warmth of heart and kindness of disposition; and I say to every such person, "You have received one of the most blessed of gifts in your capacity of employing wit and humor, and so of enlivening society; but if you have perverted it so as to make your presence dangerous, or so that people are afraid of you, and so that your shadow falls depressingly on them, you have prostituted one of the most glorious gifts of God to one of the most infernal purposes." Beware how you use wit, irony, sarcasm. Beware of indulging in jests at other people's expense. Beware of getting the reputation of being smart at the expense of others. Take heed to what is required by kindness in this world. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men."

The habit of contradiction and argument, a combative tendency, leads to a vast amount of excitement and disquiet in life. We know what it is to be a "bully." We see men boasting of their strength, and saying provoking things in the hope of getting into a quarrel with their fellow men. There are men that may be called *logical* bullies—men that want to argue with you. If you say anything, they dispute it. Argument leads to disputation speedily, and disputation to quarreling, and quarreling to ill-will.

Therefore, "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Let them alone. If they do not want to have a conflict with you, if they do not want to measure swords with you, do not annoy them. Do not make a moral gladiator of yourself.

I cannot describe that realm of unhappiness and disturbance which is created by the tale-bearer, by the scandal-monger, by the man who rejoices in evil. There are men who go about seeking bad

news. And when they have heard a thing unfavorable to somebody, they straightway tell of it. When they go home, they have a kind of chuckling laugh over it, and say, "I have found out something about that man; have you heard it? It is too good to keep." And they smack their lips over it. They are lovers of carrion.

There are men who have an intuition for discovering faults in others. They see them as quick as a flash of lightning; and they tell of them wherever they go. There is the ill-conceived jest; there is the vulgar allusion; there is the story that ought never to be repeated; there are the things that ought to be hidden; and these things are their special delight. Men drag out of the family things which the sacredness of the family should secrete and smother where they were born. There are men who are vampires, feeding on their fellow men in this way. And the amount of ill-will that is created in a neighborhood by tale-bearers is astounding.

The only excuse which men give for thus reporting things that are evil in regard to others, is that *they are true.* But you have no right to report anything evil of a man, even if it is true, unless you have a benevolent purpose. The law is unequivocal, that you have no right to tell anything about your neighbor that will damage him, unless you do it for the sake of moral principle. If it be a crime against the public, you may be obliged, for the sake of the public, to reveal it. If there be danger that it will overwhelm innocent parties, you may be obliged to reveal it for the sake of shielding those parties. But if there is no purpose of good in your mind, you have no right to make it known. If your neighbor has done a mean thing, you have no right to report it, and so expose him to contempt or ridicule, unless the public good demands it.

The indiscretions of life are innumerable. There are few persons who have not their unwatchful hours in which they do or say things that are not wise. Every man has his train of infelicities. But as they sprung from him, they ought not to be carried far away from him. Let them alone. *The tale-bearer kindles a fire that burns to the lowest hell.* More separations of friends, more contentions and divisions, more heartaches, in this world, have been occasioned by tale-bearing than by any other cause.

A scandal-monger—a man who carries damaging news to one person concerning another—is like one who carries contraband goods; and the partaker is as bad as the thief. There ought to be some law against the spreading of scandals. It is a monstrosity that ought not to be tolerated among the children of God; but I am obliged to say that persons who are in many respects worthy to be called Christians, indulge in carrion-eating, and seem to relish their diet.

There is often an indiscreet frankness which leads to great trouble among men. Telling men unpleasant truths about themselves, telling them their faults, telling them what other people have said about them,—this is generally unwise. Blurting out the truth about people into their faces is impolite.

There is an impression that if a man has a truth he should let it fly, hit where it may; that the truth should be uttered whatever it may be. A doctor might as well stand with his saddle-bags and scatter their contents through the community, as a man tell all that he knows about people indiscriminately. Medicine is to be carefully administered. It is the work of skill to properly administer it. It is to be given according to the constitution, temperament, and condition of the patient. And truth, being a medicine, instead of being thrown about heedlessly, and indiscriminately, and with brutal barbarity, is to be administered with care and discretion. The truth is to be used with great consideration. It is an instrument, and is to be employed, not rashly, but wisely. Its use should be governed by a spirit of benevolence. Do not speak the truth bluntly and without consideration, and then take to yourself credit for great frankness in doing it.

I might mention indiscreet urgency in religious teaching. There is often a lack of consideration of times and seasons, of moods and temperaments, and of the feelings and dispositions of men. Far be it from me to dissuade you from being in season and out of season in religious instruction; nevertheless a truly wise and benevolent person will often find occasion to be silent—more often, perhaps, than to speak. But there are many religious persons who go about with an incisiveness and pertinacity which annoy and vex people, and introduce an element of disquiet by which more harm than good is done. Live peaceably in your vocation as religious conversationalists.

You will see that these tendencies spring from selfishness and pride and the predominance of your lower nature; and you are to see to it that, under various guises and pretenses, it does not rise up and provoke men. "As much as lieth in you," govern yourself; restrain yourself; temper all your dispositions by the great law of love. Then you can, so far as these causes are concerned, "live peaceably with all men."

But there are causes which you cannot overrule. There are times in which you cannot live peaceably with men. You must therefore make up your mind to go through scenes of disagreement with men. But you must see to it that you go through them in a manly and Christian way.

# THE SERMONS

OF

# HENRY WARD BEECHER,

IN

*Plymouth Church, Brooklyn.*

FROM VERBATIM REPORTS BY T. J. ELLINWOOD.

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First, where you are tempted to commit evil, there is a great distinction to be drawn between suffering evil and committing evil. A man may oftentimes suffer the penalty of a law rather than commit evil which is legalized. For instance, I sheltered run-away slaves, which was an illegal act; and I look back with extreme pleasure upon my course in that regard. The law said I should not do it, and humanity said I should, and I said I would. If I had known that I should be arraigned and punished for it, I would have met the punishment and suffered it rather than have denied succor to the oppressed. I would not do a wrong thing, even if the law commanded me to do it. I would not neglect to do a right thing which I knew was fundamentally important, even for the sake of obeying the law. A man must do good. He must not do evil though the king should command him to. There is a higher law than any human enactment, and there is a higher authority than any earthly monarch. Men may pervert this truth, but it is none the less a great truth.

There are cases, therefore, in which when you are commanded by the law to do evil, you will be obliged to resist, and make great disturbance. You *must* resist; and it will not be your fault that there is a disturbance of peace. And there are a great many other cases where, in your business relations and social connections, you will be placed in circumstances in which the interest of others pushes you toward the commission of evil, but in which you must not do it; as, for instance, where a will is made, and one of the heirs is determined to break it unjustly if he possibly can. He requires some one of the other heirs to go with him, and he concentrates on you all manner of persuasions, and attempts to garnish the act, and bring you to the commission of it. If you will not yield, he will break with you. There is that million of dollars, and that will must be broken, so that the money can flow down into his pocket; and you are standing in the way, and opposing the interest of one of your own flesh and blood. But you are satisfied that the will is right. You are satisfied that, whatever may have been the discretion of the maker, he was in a state to make his will; and you say, "No, I cannot join you." The rage and fury of excited avarice which you behold is not sufficient to swerve you from what you regard to be your duty. You stand firm in your sense of justice; and you must stand firm.

A river complains to the rock on its bank, of the noise which it is making. Why does the rock make the noise? Because it will not budge, and the water will. So that it is the water, and not the rock, that makes the noise. The rock stood there, and had a

right to stand there; and if the water would beat against it and make a noise, it was not the rock's fault. The man who is free from wickedness is accused by wicked men of making all the turmoil and excitement; but he does not. He stands by the right, and they are determined to pursue the wrong; and they dash against him. If a man is honest, false accusations will be brought against him, and he will get the reputation of being dishonest Those who are rebuked by his honesty will lie about him and slander him. A man must be honest and faithful, but he will have to suffer for his fidelity. A man must stand for the right, no matter what happens. He must keep the peace as far as possible; but he must keep peace with his own conscience. He must do that which seems to him to be right. And having done that, he is to stand. Stand in your integrity. And if there is around you, in consequence of it, the fire of persecution, you are not to blame. You have not broken the peace.

You recollect that when the old tyrant had vexed and annoyed Israel through years of misrule, and the prophet had attempted to see that the laws were obeyed, and that the welfare of the people was maintained, at every point the king said to him, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" The tyrant, the man who was to blame, put the blame on the man that resisted him. Wicked men charge those who have resisted their wickedness with all the mischief and disturbance that ensues.

Christian virtue sometimes stands in the way of men's pleasure. Sometimes it happens that an individual is solicited to taste wine which conscientiously he cannot touch, and he stirs up great resistance by refusing. "What," his companions say to him, "do you refuse to join us?" "I should love to join you if I could, but the thing is one which I cannot do. It is not right for me with my present conscience and judgment. It may be right for you, and I will not attempt to be your master; but I cannot do it." "So you will break up the pleasure of this evening, will you? You will stand out, will you?" "Certainly, I must stand out." And so there is a great deal of disturbance and ill-feeling. But you do not breed it. They ask you to violate your own conscience for their pleasure, but you cannot do it. If you suffer, you must; and if they suffer it is their fault—not yours.

It sometimes happens that a person is placed in peculiarly trying circumstances. A man is totally abstinent. Not only has he vowed that he will abstain from the use of intoxicating drinks, but his conscience has gone with his vow. He finds himself in a large and fashionable company. He sees that his refusing to take a

glass of wine will be construed into a rebuke of all the persons present.

A young man goes into a rich man's house, the house of his patron, and he is urged to take wine. He says, "I am a pledged man, and I cannot." His companions laugh, and say, "Oh, of course; we understand all that; but you will not refuse under the circumstances." And so young men are tempted by the thoughtless to give up their principles. If the young man is firm, and says, "No, I cannot," and the man whose guest he is says, "You do not mean to insult me in my own house, do you?" the trial is doubly severe. It is very painful for a young man to be put in such a situation; and it is very ill-judged hospitality to put a man in such a situation. There is a gift which enables a man, under such circumstances, to say "No" without offense; but all have not that gift. And yet, one must stand to his principles though it be offensive, though it disturb the whole circle, nay, though it kill him. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men;" but do not slay your conscience for the sake of other people's peace.

Those who are called to teach and spread abroad unwelcome truths, must make up their minds not to live peaceably. There is nothing that creates more excitement in a community, not accustomed to thorough preaching, than the bold utterance of truths which rebuke men's lives, and call their dispositions to account, and rouse their consciences, without giving them power to control their passions. So it comes to pass that pioneer preachers in every community are persecuted. It is said that they are not wise. Nobody is wise in that respect. No man can preach the truth faithfully without offending men. Our Master could not do it. The apostles could not. The most gifted preachers that the world has ever produced have not preached the truth so that men have not resisted it. A man must make up his mind, that if he fulfills his duty in preaching, there will be great excitement. It is quite possible for a man to be a disturber of the community, and yet a benefactor in it.

There was a time when nothing so universally excited the opposition and rage of men as to preach that no man had a right to own his fellow man, and that slavery was a sin against God, and an offense against liberty, and that it was impolitic. I have seen the time when to have said so much as that would have caused a rustle over the congregation. So many words would have set on fire a dozen newspapers. But now such things are palatable. Now they can be said without creating the least disturbance. Many

men who during the anti-slavery excitement gained the reputation of being hot-heads and fanatics, were, after all, heroic men, wise men, peace-loving men, as we look back upon them now. They bore testimony to the truth against a great national sin; and sin does not like to be rebuked.

So, then, no earnest preacher of the truth can avoid disturbance by any wisdom or guile. No man can preach the whole truth and not anger men. It does not need to be rashly preached. Because it is necessarily offensive, you should all the more seek to make it as little offensive as possible without taking away its power, its edge, and its effectiveness.

You cannot attempt to oppose men's worldly interests for the sake of public morality, for the reformation of the community, for the purification of the ballot; you cannot undertake to carry ethical law, with all its power, into a commercial community, without rousing up an immense amount of anger and indignation. But somebody must do these things. No Christian man has a right to see the city in which he lives go down like Sodom and Gomorrah and put out no hand nor voice to save it. Can anything be more wicked than for persons to sit still in comfortable places while the community is reeking with corruption around them? Christian men are bound to be "lights." They are bound to be "salt." But in a community, what "salt" is there where all manner of flagrant and outrageous vices are fomenting and spreading; where the whole city is full of pit-falls; where the young are in danger of being destroyed? We are to take care of our children the best way we can; but thousands of children have nobody to care for them. Your son may escape; but the young man from the country, who has no father nor mother, and no one that cares for him, will, because he is so frank and sympathetic, be the first victim. A young man who is cold and selfish is not in so much danger; but a young man who is warm-hearted and generous is liable to be taken advantage of and ruined. The sweetest fruit is destroyed by the plague-rot first; and men who believe in the life to come, and the power of true godliness; men who are under the influence of God's beneficence—are they to live undisturbed by the vast brood of drinking-houses in the community? Are they to escape from the allurements of damnable gambling saloons? And shall Christian men behold the destruction of the young by vice, and do nothing to shield and rescue them? But you cannot expect to take these steps in the work of reformation without bringing upon yourself reproach, and contempt, and hatred, and bitter persecution.

Only one thing more. We have received our ideas of Christian duty historically, to a very large extent. They have come down to us from the notions which prevailed in despotic and absolute governments. Any government where the king or ruling class makes all the laws, the people have, comparatively speaking, little to do. They are not bound, or they feel that they are not bound, to do more than to obey. But in a community where the people themselves make their laws, and procure the administration of those laws by the election of their officers, there arises a very different class of questions of ethical duty, and a very different set of influences, from those which have been handed down to us from olden times. It is simply preposterous for a Christian nation to be controlled in detail by its government. I hold that every nation is responsible for the administration of its laws. It is the duty of the church to see that Christian communities are instructed, and that the wicked shall not have power to guide the system which the State has committed to them, but that it shall be entrusted to good men.

Shall I, when I see a thief breaking into my house, draw the bed-clothes over my head, and say, "Let him take what he will if he will not shoot me?" Would that be manly? The house of such a man ought to burned over his head. A man in his household is like an officer stationed in a fort; and he is bound to defend it against burglars and sneak-thieves. If more men who own houses would visit condign punishments on sneak-thieves there would be far less of these pests in society. If a dozen men were shot dead while breaking into houses, there would be a great dearth of burglars. It is because men let these desperadoes do what they will, it is because men surrender their own houses to criminals, that there are so many thefts and burglaries. And it is because the people give up the control of their affairs to the government that there is so much mismanagement and corruption. In becoming a citizen of the country, you put yourself under the obligation of seeing to it that the State suffers no harm at the hands of wicked men. You are bound to set yourself against selfishness and avarice, and against all corruption, whether it be in high or in low places. You are bound to see that your courts are pure. If it requires time, that is what time is given you for. If it requires effort, that is what you are under obligation to give. If it requires you to do things which are disgustful, and which you do not want to do, that is the yoke which Christ lays on you. It is a shame and disgrace to Christians and churches that there are so many scoundrels in positions of trust in New York and Brooklyn. It is because we have a limited conception of our duties. It is because there has

been a lack of training with regard to their obligations in ethical matters, that there are such outbreaking sins in our midst. Christians ought to be an insurance against the perpetration of mischiefs by rascals in the community. If there is anything that Christian men ought to do, it is to see to it that the administration of the laws is in the hands of good men. If there is anything which is a disgrace to any community, it is that supineness of the church which allows the worst men to sit in power and corrupt the government, and undermine the prosperity of the nation, and destroy it. If there is one thing that is needed in the community more than another, it is that offenders should be arrested, and in the sight of all men be punished—not cruelly, not without your sympathy, and not without your sorrow, but nevertheless firmly and persistently. There should be such a moral impression produced that sin shall be dangerous, and that righteousness shall be the only safety, to the individual, the family and the State. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men;" but when men persist in destroying the good order and purity of the community, you cannot be at peace with them until you have subdued them.

Christian brethren, it is not enough to make atonement for past neglect. You are to fire your indignation so that it shall burn like a torch; and you are to search out the causes of corruption, and probe them to the bottom. Make up your mind to take time to do your duty. You must drill as common soldiers. You must think more of the interests of the State, and less about your individual interests. You must take care of the public welfare. If Christian men neglect the public welfare, what can you expect of those who are under no moral influences, and are guided by no Christian principle? If you do not look after the weal of society, with what reason can you turn upon the selfish and scrambling men who are plundering the community? In your course, hereafter, Christian men, the State must find its preservation.

Young men, and men advanced in years, turn out, every one of you, and fulfill your whole duty. Be instant in season and out of season. Be true to your political obligations. You are never following your Master more than when you attempt to serve the State faithfully. See to it that the commonwealth is delivered from the thrall of vice, and brought under the dominion of virtue and integrity, and made prosperous by righteousness.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We bless thy name, our Father, that thou hast not made the way of supplication straight and narrow, as is the way of duty; but that thou hast made it easy to pray unto thee. Our hearts gush forth spontaneously, sometimes in praise, sometimes in supplication, and in communion often. We thank thee that thou hast so clothed the earth with all the tokens of thy wisdom and power that when we rejoice in things most beautiful our thoughts glance off from the things made, to thee, the Creator of them, and that day by day we find it not hard, in thought, in feeling, nor even in expression, to commune with thee, praying always, giving thanks, making supplication. We thank thee that thou hast made our intercourse with thee as the conversation of a child with a parent. We rejoice that thou art accessible to our thought. Though we do not understand thy providence, though we often bring to thee things that are not right, yet we rejoice that thou dost accept us by the goodness that is in thee, rather than by the goodness that is in us. It is through thy grace and mercy and paternal goodness that thou dost accept us. Thou dost not measure thy gifts according to our desert, but according to thine own generosity. Thou art surrounding us with bounty more than we know, or can know until we enter the life that is to come. Thy glory is in doing good. The heavens are filled with thy presence, and the earth doth not know all that secret of God which is moving in the affairs of men. We rejoice, O Lord, that our strength is in thee. We desire to glory in thee, and in thee only. Not when riches increase, not when we become powerful, not when we reach the ends of our ambition, not when our earthly estate is all that we would have it, do we desire to glory. We desire to glory in this: that God loves us; that his providence is around us; that all his ways are appointed for us; that we are strengthened by a supervising kindness; that day by day we have the privilege of looking to thee and communing with thee.

So thou art granting pleasure in pain, strength in weakness, and guidance in perplexity. Thou art evermore giving us the best company. Even in the depths of solitude there are about us thine angel bands; and thou thyself, by the Spirit, art communing with us.

Now, we desire to live worthy of this vocation to which we are called, and to walk with a consciousness that we are preparing for the invisible realm, and to know more and more perfectly the will of God. We pray that thou wilt teach us to conform our whole life to thy wisdom. May we have that wisdom which belongs to purity. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that more and more the law of God may shine in the example of his people on earth. Purify thy people of every name, everywhere. May they be more courageous for the truth. May they be more and more earnest in the great conflict which is being waged against selfishness and pride and avarice, and all other forms of sin. We pray that thou wilt inspire them to do more valiantly than they have ever done in the building up of thy kingdom among men.

We pray for the poor, for the ignorant, for the neglected, for the outcast, for the friendless. We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless those who are carrying forth the tidings of salvation among mankind. We pray that they may be strengthened with great faith and patience and perseverance to do the work of the Lord.

We rejoice, O Lord, that thou art giving the signs and tokens of thine advancing power in our own land, and in other lands. Though suffering rules still, though thou art obliged by pains and penalties to put forward

thy kingdom, yet we rejoice to believe that the day is preparing and advancing in which thou canst work more by pleasure and joy and peace, and less by sorrow. Even so, reveal, we beseech of thee, thy power. More and more may men rise from their lower conditions and that animal life in which thou must needs deal with them by force, and come into that sacred atmosphere where thou canst say to them, Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends.

O thou blessed God, we ask not the revelation of the secrets of thy providence; we ask not to pry into the future, nor to look behind the curtain and see what thou hast prepared. Grant only this: that we may have faith in thee and thy providence, and that we may go forward with hope, so that in the midst of doubts and discouragements we may be saved by faith. May we have that faith which works by love. And so may we be prepared for our earthly duties, and be prepared therein for that rest which remaineth for the people of God in heaven.

Vouchsafe thy blessing, to-night, to every one present. Listen to each one's desire and prayer. Draw near to all who are in trouble; to all who are afflicted; to all who are suffering in body or mind. By their troubles and afflictions and sufferings prepare them for a better life here, and for life hereafter.

We pray that thou wilt recall the wandering. Rouse up those who are indifferent to their moral state. Draw near, to-night, we beseech of thee, to all who have laid aside their former purposes, and back-slidden from their faith. Draw near to all who are far from thee by evil works. Arouse in them a conscience toward a better life. We pray that there may be the beginnings of better living, and that men may strive, who have not striven before, to forsake their easily besetting sins, and to put on the whole armor of God. We pray that thou wilt call many who are hesitating to a profession of their faith in Christ. We beseech of thee that thy kingdom may come in all the churches about us, and that this season may be a season of reviving, and that thy cause may be advanced, and thy name glorified among men.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, shall be the praise forever and forever. *Amen.*

## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee to bless the word of instruction. Grant that thy people may be prepared, full-armed, and keep drilled in every duty, and take their part of the duties in the household, in the church, in the affairs of society, in the State, everywhere. May the witness of Christ be with his disciples. May they go about doing good. May they seek to allay all passions and irritations by inspiring goodness and purity and integrity. So may they preserve, by the salt of divine grace, the affairs about them, that thy name may be honored and glorified.

Accept our thanks for all the mercies of the sanctuary to-day—for the service of song; for communion with thee; for our meditations. We thank thee for all the bounties of this Sabbath day here. May its spirit rest upon us during all the week, and restrain in us all that is evil, and inspire in us whatever is good. And so may thy Word be the man of our counsel, and our guide to eternal life.

And the praise shall be given to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*